

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Supporting House Bill 5391

Testimony of Alex Thayer

February 19th, 2018

Electric skateboards are a great new form of transportation that has been introduced commercially in the past couple years with many benefits to offer citizens, cities, and the state alike. An electric skateboard is a traditional skateboard or longboard that has been outfitted with electric motors, a remote controller, and battery pack. Equipped with all this tech, electric skateboards are able to travel at speeds often between 20 and 25mph for distances of up to a couple dozen miles while maintaining safety with the use of electronic brakes. Electric skateboards are part of a continually building movement for personal green transportation devices than enable skateboarding to be a practical form of transportation for daily tasks and commuting.

There are a number of transportation issues that we all deal with on a daily basis that electric skateboards can help to address. For the past couple years, every day of the summer I have been privileged to be a part of that solution by commuting to school, work, and daily activities on an electric skateboard. Not only have I produced zero carbon emissions during my trips, but I have taken a car off the road, reduced traffic in downtown areas, and freed up a parking spot everywhere I stop. I can say first hand that integrating this technology into my life has made transportation as a teen more affordable and accessible. Additionally, electric skateboards are a great solution to the last mile problem that has always presented a great hurdle to the adoption of public transportation. With an electric skateboard by your side public transportation becomes practical for many more people who would otherwise need to walk long distances to their final destinations.

Unfortunately, electric skateboards currently lack a clear definition in the Michigan Vehicle Code, which has generated a lot of controversy in the small beach town of Frankfort where I live. Skateboards and police historically don't always have the best relationship, and as long as this revolutionary form of transportation lacks proper legal documentation it can easily fall prey to local authorities who aren't aware of the bigger picture and movement behind them. In Frankfort, It has taken the city police and local government over two years of debate and arguing with the local skateboarders to get no closer to agreeing on proper regulation of electric skateboards, which is why this amendment to the Michigan Vehicle Code is so important. Under this new law, the confusion that has caused so much debate in Frankfort will finally be resolved, paving the way for electric skateboards to be embraced across the state as the great technology they are.

Thank you for your time.

831 James St, Frankfort MI 49635

alexjthayer@gmail.com

231-930-7544